

**REMARKS**

Claims 9-12, 14-16 and 18 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 9 and 11 are amended and claim 13 is canceled. No new matter is added.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies shown to Applicants' representative by Examiner Leyson in the June 27 personal interview. Applicants' separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

**I. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter**

The Office Action rejects claims 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 3,790,654 to Bagley in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,834,640 to Inoue et al. (Inoue) and U.S. Patent No. 1,973,428 to Comstock; rejects claims 11-16 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Bagley in view of Inoue and Comstock and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,219,509 to Cocchetto et al. (Cocchetto); rejects claims 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Japanese Patent Publication No. 2000-326318 to Masaaki et al. (Masaaki) in view of Bagley; and rejects claims 11-16 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Masaaki in view of Bagley and further in view of Inoue and Cocchetto. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claims 9 and 11 recite, *inter alia*, the holding plate and the back holding plate are made of "the metal carbide powder of transition metal element series includes any one of TaC and TiC." Support for the amendment can be found in the specification at, for example, page 7, lines 9-15.

Bagley fails to teach or disclose the holding plate or the back holding plate are made of the metal carbide powder of transition metal element series including any one of TaC and TiC. Masaaki, Inoue, Comstock and Cocchetto fail to cure the deficiencies of Bagley.

Accordingly, the applied references, alone or in any combination, fail to teach or suggest the recited features of claims 9 and 11.

For at least these reasons, independent claims 9 and 11 and their dependent claims are patentable over the applied references. Thus, withdrawal of the rejection of the claims is respectfully requested.

**II. Conclusion**

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: July 3, 2007

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